

Message Text

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ACTION EA-08

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4303

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 12925

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: ANNUAL U.S. POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR USSR REVISITED

REF: STATE 202500

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES REVIEW OF ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT FOR USSR REPORTED REFTEL. LIKE THE DEPARTMENT, WE RECOGNIZE THAT CERTAIN ISSUES HAVE CHANGED DIMENSIONS SINCE OUR ORIGINAL ASSESSMENT, AND WE TOO BELIEVE THAT THE MAIN FOCUS OF POLICY ANALYSIS SHOULD BE ON THE FUTURE. STILL, THE ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENT AND ELABORATED IN THE MEETING REPORTED REFTEL PROVIDE A USEFUL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUING DISCUSSION. FOLLOWING COMMENTS KEYED TO REFTEL PARAS ARE INTENDED AS EMBASSY CONTRIBUTION.

2. IN SUGGESTING THAT SALT MAY TO SOME EXTENT BE SEPARABLE FROM OTHER ASPECTS OF THE U.S.-USSR RELATIONSHIP (PARA 3 REFTEL), THE EMBASSY DID NOT MEAN TO SUGGEST THAT SALT IS SOMEHOW PERIPHERAL. THE SUGGESTION WAS BASED ON OUR JUDGMENT THAT PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL INTEREST ON BOTH SIDES HAVE GENERATED COMMITMENTS TO SALT SUCCESS SO STRONG THAT THEY CAN SURVIVE A CERTAIN LACK OF PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP. THESE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL INTEREST

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NO DOUBT DIFFER. FOR INSTANCE, IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT IN OUR

VIEW TO ASSUME THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE CEASED TO PURSUE SOME KIND OF STRATEGIC SUPERIORITY, HOWEVER ELUSIVE. BUT THEY CLEARLY PERCEIVE AN INTEREST IN NEGOTIATING SERIOUSLY ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP IN SALT, AND WE HAVE AN INTEREST IN EXPLOITING THIS WILLINGNESS IN ORDER TO STABILIZE THE STRATEGIC EQUILIBRIUM. AS A RESULT OF THIS MUTUAL INTEREST, SALT IS INDEED A TESTIMONY TO INCREASING CONFIDENCE AND A STABILIZING FACTOR ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF OUR RELATIONS. IT ALSO PLAYS THE SAME ROLE OUTSIDE THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP: RECURRENT CRISES AND FRICTION ELSEWHERE CAN HURT SALT PROSPECTS, AND COMMITMENT TO THE SALT PROCESS CAN RESTRAIN ADVENTURIST BEHAVIOR IN THIRD AREAS. THEREFORE WE AGREE FULLY WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCLUSION (PARA 4A REFTTEL) THAT A SUCCESSFUL SALT II SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY GOAL.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE MFN,CREDITS ISSUE (PARA 4B REFTTEL), WE ALSO QUESTION WHETHER AN EFFORT TO GET MFN THROUGH CONGRESS AGAINST LONG ODDS WOULD BE WORTH IT NOW. AT THE TIME WE SUGGESTED THE USEFULNESS OF SUCH AN EFFORT, THE SOVIETS SEEMED TO HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO DETENTE. SINCE THEN, THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER TO THE CONGRESS AND TWO VERY USEFUL HIGH-LEVEL CONGRESSIONAL VISITS HERE HAVE MADE THE ADMINISTRATION'S STAND ON THIS ISSUE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS, AND WE BELIEVE THE MESSAGE HAS GOTTEN THROUGH. IF THEY ARE SATISFIED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS ACTING IN GOOD FAITH--AND WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO THINK THAT THEY ARE--, AND IF THEY CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ADEQUATE AND TIMELY EXPLANATIONS OF OUR TACTICS, THEY WILL PROBABLY DEFER TO OUR JUDGMENTS ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ACHIEVE THE PROGRESS BOTH SIDES DESIRE. IN THE EMBASSY'S VIEW, THEREFORE, THE MFN/CREDIT ISSUE NEED NOT BE AN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS.

4. THAT SAID, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE CLIMATE IN CONGRESS WOULD BE IMPROVED BY THE KINDS OF DEVELOPMENTS NOTED IN PARA 4B, REFTTEL. THE TROUBLE IS THAT THIS MAY NOT BE AS APPARENT TO THE SOVIETS AS IT IS TO US. THEY ARE COMMITTED TO SALT SUCCESS; WOULD OBVIOUSLY LIKE A SUCCESSFUL WASHINGTON SUMMIT; AND HAVE BEEN RESTRAINED IN THE MIDDLE EAST (ASSUMING
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THEY HAVE HAD OPTIONS OTHER THAN RESTRAINT). BUT DESPITE THE ADMINISTRATION'S BEST EFFORTS AND THE CLARITY OF CONGRESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS HERE, THEY HAVE TROUBLE RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT IN CONGRESS OF WHAT THEY DO ON EMIGRATION, ON CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, ON PORTUGAL. WE SEE ADVANTAGE TO DRAWING SOVIET ATTENTION TO THE DESIRABILITY OF IMPROVEMENTS IN SOME OF THESE AREAS, AT THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL LEVEL AND IN TIMELY FASHION.

5. WE ARE RATHER MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF LINKAGE IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS THAN SOME OF THE DEPARTMENT DISCUSSANTS (PARA 4(C)2 REFTEL). WE SEE THREE REASONS WHY LINKAGE WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE EVEN AFTER THE MAJOR UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL DEADLINES ARE PAST: (1) OTHER DEADLINES WILL ARISE; (2) THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES WHERE THE U.S. AND THE USSR ARE INVOLVED TOGETHER WILL INCREASE RATHER THAN DECREASE; AND (3) AS HARD BARGAINERS AND (OCCASIONAL) DIALECTICIANS, THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF LINKAGE, EVEN WHEN WE DO NOT.

6. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THE SOVIETS MAY NOT BE INCLINED TO REARRANGE PATTERNS OF LINKAGE ONCE THE IMMEDIATE PRESSURE OF THE 1975-6 DEADLINES IS OFF. ON THE CONTRARY, WE SUSPECT THEY WILL SEEK TO DISTINGUISH MORE BETWEEN BILATERAL ISSUES, WHERE LINKAGE IS ACCEPTABLE OR AT LEAST NORMAL, AND MULTILATERAL ISSUES (SUCH AS THOSE ACTIVE IN THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE, THE IAEA AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS) WHERE IT IS NOT.

7. IN OUR VIEW IT WOULD BE TO THE U.S. ADVANTAGE TO DETERMINE THE PATTERN OF LINKAGES, RATHER THAN LET THE SOVIETS DO IT FOR US, BY EXTENDING CONSULTATIONS WITH THEM TO INCLUDE "NEW AREAS" AND "NEW ISSUES." RECOGNIZING A LARGER SOVIET ROLE IN CERTAIN AREAS IS NOT TO OFFER A GIFT TO THE USSR, BUT TO RECOGNIZE REALITY. BRINGING THE SOVIETS IN ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES WHERE THEY HAVE A REAL ROLE TO PLAY MEANS TRYING TO AVOID RATHER THAN BORROWING TROUBLE. CONSULTATION AS A PROCESS CAN SERVE TO ENHANCE CONFIDENCE, PREDICTABILITY AND STABILITY, WITHOUT REQUIRING EITHER SIDE TO RENOUNCE VITAL INTERESTS OR FORSAKE ITS ALLIES AND FRIENDS. ON OUR PART, IT ASSUMES THOUGHT, CARE AND INITIATIVE: TOPICS MUST BE CHOSEN
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TO REDUCE SHORT-TERM DISADVANTAGES TO A MINIMUM; WE MUST MAKE CLEAR AT EVERY STEP THAT RESTRAINT AND NOT CONDOMINIUM IS THE SOLE PURPOSE OF CONSULTATION. BUT WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AS AN EXAMPLE, ALLAYING THE APPREHENSIONS OF FRIENDS AND ALLIES SHOULD REMAIN A MANAGEABLE PROBLEM.

8. SO CONCEIVED AND SO EXECUTED, EXPANDED CONSULTATIONS COULD PROVIDE A PROPER AND FRUITFUL INSTRUMENT FOR ENCOURAGING SOVIET RESTRAINT AND INCREASING OUR INFORMATION ON SOVIET MOTIVES AND PLANS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE EMBASSY SHARES THE DOUBTS EXPRESSED IN REFTEL MEETING (PARA 4(D)) CONCERNING MAJOR EFFORT TO BRING THE SOVIETS WHOLESAL INTO DISCUSSIONS OF GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE ISSUES. AS WE POINTED OUT IN MOSCOW 7182, SOVIET POTENTIAL FOR MISCHIEF IN THESE AREAS IS CONSIDERABLE. IN SAME CABLE, HOWEVER, WE IDENTIFIED THE WORLD FOOD ISSUE AS

ONE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC PROBLEM WHERE SOVIET ROLE WOULD
ON BALANCE SERVE U.S. INTERESTS, IF ONLY BECAUSE A WORLD FOOD
SYSTEM MAY PROVE UNWORKABLE WITHOUT THE USSR'S PARTICIPATION.
SOVIET HESITATION SHOULD NOT OF ITSELF PREVENT US FROM PUTTING
SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN A WORLD FOOD SOLUTION ON THE AGENDA.

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LIMDIS

9. CONVERSELY, BROADENED CONSULTATIONS COULD HAVE A USEFUL
FEEDBACK EFFECT IN MORE "CLASSIC" AREAS OF COOPERATION. FOR
EXAMPLE, INTERDEPENDENCE OF FOOD POLICY, INCLUDING BOTH WORLD
FOOD PROBLEMS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS FOR
FOOD AND FEED-GRAIN IMPORTS, COULD BRING THE AGRICULTURAL
AGREEMENT TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL. AND, WHILE BOTH SIDES WOULD
GAIN, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT FOR US COULD WELL BE
OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND TRADE, INFORMATION AND IDEAS AND,
SPECIFICALLY, TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS ON AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY
AND THE MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF AGRO-BUSINESS.

10. WE SEE A CONCEPTUAL LINK BETWEEN THE IMPLICATIONS OF
SOVIET GREAT POWER STATUS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF PRESSING
AHEAD THROUGH ESTABLISHED CHANNELS FOR EXPANDED CONTACTS. THE
INCENTIVE TO BE TREATED AS A GREAT POWER IS ALSO AN INCENTIVE
TO ACT LIKE A NORMAL STATE. IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT
RELATIONS NORMAL TO MAJOR STATES IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA

INCLUDE CONTACTS IN THE FIELDS OF INFORMATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, CULTURE AND PEOPLE. NO DOUBT THE SOVIETS WILL SEEK TO ENFORCE THEIR OWN PREFERENCES IN THESE FIELDS. THEY WILL PREFER GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONTACTS, INCLUDING VISITS BY MILITARY LEADERS

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HINTED TO DAO IN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER OF THIS YEAR. THEY WILL PREFER EXCHANGES IN PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO EXCHANGES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. THEY WILL PREFER TO AVOID CONTAMINATION BY WESTERN IDEAS OF LIBERTY AND PLURALISM. WE TOO WILL HAVE PREFERENCES, AND IN MANY CASES OPPOSITE PREFERENCES. BUT THE MAIN POINT IS THAT PURSUIT OF GREAT POWER STATUS CAN BE EXPECTED TO BROADEN THE LIMITS THE SOVIETS WILL SEEK TO PLACE ON UNWELCOME AND POTENTIALLY DAMAGING CONTACTS.

11. IF SO, THEN WE SEE EVERY REASON TO PRESS AHEAD. THE QUESTIONS RAISED AT REFTEL MEETING CONCERNING THE VALUE OF EXPANDING CONTACTS (PARA 4(E) REFTEL) APPEAR TO US TO REFLECT EFFECTS OF EXPANDED CONTACTS, RATHER THAN FIRST PRINCIPLES. THE OPENING T O THE WEST WILL HAVE DIFFERENT AND OPPOSED EFFECTS ON SOVIET SOCIETY (AND SOVIET GOVERNMENT) AT DIFFERENT MOMENTS. IMPORTS OF TECHNOLOGY BOTH HELP AND HURT: THEY CAN ABBREVIATE THE TIME NEEDED TO OVERCOME CERTAIN R&D LAGS, BUT THEY CAN ALSO ENCOURAGE THE SOVIETS TO TREAT THE SYMPTOMS RATHER THAN THE BASIC CAUSES OF THEIR ECONOMIC ILLS. EXPANSION OF BILATERAL TRADE CAN BRING THE SOVIETS NEEDED EQUIPMENT INPUTS, BUT IT WILL DRAW DOWN NON-RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES IN RETURN. HOW THE BALANCE WORKS OUT WILL DEPEND VERY MUCH ON SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTS AND SPECIFIC IMPACTS. BUT, JUST AS WE SEE NO NEED AT THIS TIME TO MAKE A GENERAL JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN NEW ISSUES IS DESIRABLE REGARDLESS OF SHORT-TERM DISADVANTAGES, WE SEE NO NEED TO DRAW BACK ON PRINCIPLE FROM EXPANDING CONTACTS ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SOVIETS, TOO, MAY OCCASIONALLY BENEFIT.

12. ON THE CONTRARY, IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT IN EMBARKING ON DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION WE HAD DECIDED IN THE INTEREST OF PEACE TO GAMBLE ON THE PROPOSITION THAT LIBERALIZATION AND STABILIZATION WILL GO HAND IN HAND TO MAKE THE SOVIET UNION A MORE NORMAL AND MORE RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY. IN OTHER WORDS, IN PURSUIT OF IMPROVED SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY BEHAVIOR, WE WOULD ALSO SEEK TO LIBERALIZE SOVIET SOCIETY BY WHATEVER MODEST MEANS DETENTE PUTS AT OUR DISPOSAL. WE WOULD RECOGNIZE THAT LIBERALIZATION WOULD TEND TO MAKE THE SOVIET REGIME MORE FLIXIBLE AND EVEN IN SOME RESPECTS MORE SUCCESSFUL, IN THE HOPE AND CONFIDENCE

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THAT IT WOULD THEREBY GRADUALLY BECOME MORE A STATE AND LESS A FACTION IN A GLOBAL CIVIL WAR. WE FEEL THAT HOPE HAS BEEN JUSTIFIED BY THE MODEST PROGRESS MADE SINCE THE DETENTE PROCESS WAS ENGAGED; THAT FURTHER PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE; THAT THE EFFORT IS WORTH CONTINUING.

13. WE WOULD THEREFORE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE CONSENSUS REPORTED REFTEL THAT STRENGTHENING AND BETTER COORDINATING THE NETWORK OF INTER-RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATIONS RESULTING FROM THE SUMMIT SHOULD BE OUR OBJECTIVE. FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW, THIS IMPLIES TWO PRIORITIES. FIRST, MORE RESOURCES WILL BE REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THE IMPETUS OF OUR BILATERAL PROGRAMS AND TO EXPLOIT THE MODEST ADDED IMPETUS WE THINK CSCE CAN PROVIDE HERE. ACCORDINGLY, WE WILL BE COMING FORWARD WITH SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXCHANGE PROGRAMS IN PREPARATION FOR THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS. SECOND, THE EMBASSY NEEDS TO BE EQUIPPED TO MAKE AN OPTIMUM CONTRIBUTION (PARA 5 REFTEL). IN THIS REGARD, WE CONSIDER THE REQUIREMENTS DESCRIBED IN MOSCOW W 11835 AND A-152 STILL STAND. STOESEL

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